

1

ARCHILOCHUS, FR. 4 WEST: A COMMENTARY

DOUGLAS E. GERBER

With a few exceptions, commentators on Archilochus have generally been content simply to cite fr.4 as an illustration of his flippant, unheroic attitude towards war and have passed over the specific details of the poet's injunctions. The present study is therefore an attempt to determine as precisely as possible what it is that Archilochus is instructing an unnamed person to do.¹⁾ The text, as printed by West, is as follows:

. (.)] . (.) [

φρα[

Ξεινοί [

δειπνον δ' ου[

5

οὗτ' ἐμοί ωσαῖ[

ἀλλ' ἄγε σὺν κώϊθωνι θοῆς διὰ σέλματα νηὸς

ποίτα καὶ κοίλων πώματ' ἀφελκε κάδων,

ἄγρει δ' οἶνον ἱερυθρὸν ἀπὸ τρυγός· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμεῖς

νηφέμεν ἱέν φυλακῇ τῇδε δυνησόμεθα.

The last four lines, quoted by Athenaeus ll. 483 d in his discussion of the κώϊθων, were slightly expanded by the publication in 1908 of P. Oxy. 854.

2 φρα[: Lasserre suggests φρά[ζε or φρά[ζεο. The latter is much more probable than the former, since φράζεο appears nine times as a line-beginning in Homer and since Homer offers no example of the active form of the present of this verb. - In the margin there are horizontal strokes above and below, what Grenfell and Hunt took to be a *theta* "marking the 800th line of the manuscript," but which West and others have taken

as a paragraphus and coronis. If the latter explanation is correct, the poem began with φρα[and the line-numbering should be altered.

4 δεῖπνον δ' ου[: οὔ[τ(ε) is a likely supplement in view of the following οὔτ' and West plausibly suggests that the general meaning is 'cena ne[c tibi in promptu est] nec mihi.' Garzya's δοῦ[λιον is rightly rejected by Gentili.

Since, as I shall argue later, it is probably night, δεῖπνον may be the equivalent of δόρπον, the evening-meal, as it is in *Odyssey* 17.176, or it may simply denote food in general. Possibly in v.3 Archilochus said that ξεῖνοι travelling with them were dining, and then added that neither he nor his companion had anything to eat; or it may be that, if the ship is beached, the ξεῖνοι are hostile inhabitants of the area who are preventing the crew from foraging for food. It is also possible that Archilochus is expressing a disregard for food and a preference for wine instead, an attitude which we find in *Anth. Pal.* 11.59 and 60.

6 ἀλλ' ἄγε : an extremely common line-beginning in Homer. The papyrus verifies Musurus' correction of Athenaeus' ἀλλά τε.

οὖν κώθωνι : many of the passages in which a κώθων is mentioned are cited by Athenaeus 11. 483 a - 484 c. He quotes Critias to the effect that it was a cup used by the Spartans when on military service, since it had an inward-curving lip which held back any impurities that might be present in the water drunk by soldiers on campaign. See the plate in A. Conze, "Kothon," *Philologus* 17 (1860) 565-67, and Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. "Cothon." Athenaeus states that in the passage from Archilochus κώθων is what is ordinarily called a κύλιξ and I doubt that Archilochus was thinking of a specifically Spartan cup. Certainly there is no justification for the inference made by Bologna that Archilochus must be on a Spartan ship. For the use of a κώθων by sailors compare the scholiast on Aristophanes *Equites* 600, κώθων εἶδος ἐκπώματος ὀστρακίνου, ἢ εἶδος ποτηρίου Λακωνικοῦ καὶ στρατιωτικοῦ· ἐπεὶ δὲ μεριστὸν ὕδωρ ἐλάμβανον οἱ ναῦται, κώθωνας εἶχον. Unless Alexis (fr. 176 Kock) was exaggerating when he applied the epithet τετρακότυλος to a κώθων, it could be of considerable size. Perhaps

both its size and its use by military personnel with their reputation for 'hard drinking' caused the verb κωθωνίζω to have the meaning 'to make drunk.'

Θοής : a common epithet of νηῦς in Homer, whether the ship is in motion or not, and it is generally explained as ornamental here. Merone, however, argues that it is more "patetico a suggestivo" if we assume that the ship is plowing through the sea at night in search of the enemy. He feels that if the ship were at anchor the "note of hardship" would be removed and there would consequently be less reason for those on watch to get drunk. The preserved lines, however, contain no "note of hardship" and the boredom of keeping watch on or beside an anchored ship would no doubt provide Archilochus with sufficient reason for drinking. Also, there is no evidence that the ship is in search of the enemy or even that it is a warship. Furthermore, as Casson 44 points out, "unless utterly unavoidable, nights were spent ashore" (see also below on 9 ἐν φυλακῇ).

διὰ σέλματα : variously explained, but usually as either 'thwarts, rowers' benches' or 'deck,' and although there is some disagreement about which meaning is present in specific passages, there can be no doubt that both meanings are attested in the fifth century (see Monaco, *Palermo*, and Casson 220). Both are also given in Hesychius, s.v. σέλματα· τὰ ζυγά τῆς νεώς· ἢ τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ ζυγοῦ εἰς τὸν ζυγὸν διαστήματα· ἢ αἱ καθέδραι τῶν ἐρετῶν, καὶ συναρμογαὶ τῶν σανίδων. The word does not occur in Homer, but ἐύσσελμος is very common and either 'well-benched' or 'well-decked' would seem equally appropriate. When σέλματα denotes the 'deck,' it is sometimes the deck at the bow or stern (e.g., Euripides *Helen* 1566), but there was also in some ships a deck running the length of the ship down the middle, though "not the full width from gunwale to gunwale" (Casson 51). At first glance, therefore, Archilochus could be saying either 'through the thwarts,' i.e., over or under the thwarts (depending on the size of the ship), or 'across the thwarts,' i.e., along the decking which ran the length of the ship across the thwarts.

The latter seems to be envisaged in what is the closest parallel I have been able to find, Apollonius Rhodius 4. 1663-64, ... βῆσαι' ἐπ' ἰκριόφιν· χειρὸς δέ ἐ χειρὶ μεμαρπῶς / Αἰσονίδης ἐκόμεζε διὰ κληῖδας ἰούσαν, '... Medea went on deck, and Jason taking her hand in his guided her way across the thwarts.' Although κληῖς seems to mean 'thole-pin' in Homer (Casson 46) rather than 'rower's bench' (LSJ), it always means 'thwart, rower's bench' in Apollonius (1. 358; 399; 3. 1269; 4. 887), and it is scarcely conceivable that Apollonius intended us to imagine Jason and Medea making their way *through* (i.e., over and under) the thwarts; they must surely be moving along the deck which ran the length of the ship. She needs to be guided because she has covered her face in order to have the privacy necessary for the magic ritual she is about to perform. Although ἱκρία can mean 'afterdeck' or 'foredeck,' it is more often the former (Casson 44 and 179), and since presumably Medea would normally stay in the after part of the Argo, it is probable that she is moving from the stern to the bow.

Gigante, however, argues that διὰ with accusative must denote motion *through*, not *across*, and he therefore supports the view that Archilochus is ordering someone to go through the thwarts and give each of the rowers a κώδων of wine. The latter part of this interpretation implies that the ship is in motion, since if the rowers were not pulling the oars they would be able to provide their own wine, but for the reasons given above under Θοῆς I consider this most unlikely. Also, all the emphasis is on wine for those on watch, with no mention of rowers at all. Furthermore, I doubt that any interpretation should be based on a distinction between διὰ with the genitive and διὰ with the accusative. The two constructions can be interchangeable, as, for example, in *Odyssey* 7. 40 ἐρχόμενον κατὰ ἄστρῳ διὰ σφέας and 10. 391-92 δι' αὐτῶν / ἐρχομένη (compare also Hesiod *Erga* 513-17).

Gigante may be right, however, in arguing for 'through the thwarts.' If the κώδοι are stowed under the thwarts (see below on 7 κώδων), it would be necessary to pass through them in order to obtain the wine. For this use of διὰ compare, e.g.,

Homeric Hymn 19.8 φοιτᾶν δ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διὰ ῥωπήια πυκνά.
 In this passage διὰ means 'through' in the sense of 'among,' and that would be the sense required for our fragment if the wine is stowed under the thwarts. On the basis of the evidence at our disposal I do not see how we can make a choice between 'across the deck' and 'through (i.e., among) the thwarts.'

7 φοίτα : there has similarly been considerable debate about the precise significance of this word. Page, for example, remarks: "we cannot tell whether φοίτα means 'go to and fro repeatedly' or simply 'go': φοιτᾶν is a common line-beginning in Homer; if it was adopted because traditional here, not even Archilochus' own audience could have known which meaning was intended." Page's alternatives, however, for the meaning of φοιτᾶν are somewhat misleading. There are 19 examples of the verb in Homer, 6 in the *Homeric Hymns* and 4 (perhaps 5) in Hesiod, and in none of these does the verb mean simply 'go.' Rather it denotes either repeated movement or movement in various directions. The possibilities, therefore, are: 'go repeatedly over the deck,' 'go repeatedly through the thwarts,' and 'go this way and that through the thwarts.' The first two seem preferable to the third, since presumably more than one κώθων of wine would be required to cause the drunkenness mentioned in the last sentence and since more than one κᾶδος is to be opened.²⁾

κοίλων : except for *Odyssey* 22. 385, where κοῖλον is a line-beginning, contraction is never required in Homer and the reading κοῖλ[preserved in the papyrus may be correct. - Page contends that "the epithet 'hollow' is added not because it is specially appropriate here, but for the contrary reason -- because it is *not* specially appropriate." Kirkwood disagrees, arguing that "the strong alliteration adds to the sense of urgency and energy in the passage; there is an intriguing prolepsis (the caskets are certainly *going* to be hollow when Archilochus and his friends are through); the transfer from the Homeric phrase 'hollow ships' to an unfamiliar phrase, describing caskets aboard a ship, gives the kind of epic/non-epic combination that is typical of Archilochus's style, and that individualizes the scene."

I am inclined to agree with the latter part of Kirkwood's argument (except that κάδοι are 'casks,' not 'caskets'), but I have my doubts about the prolepsis. Certainly no such explanation is necessary, since even though the κάδοι contain wine, they could still be called 'hollow,' just as the quiver in *Odyssey* 21. 417 is given this epithet in spite of its containing arrows. It is also possible that κοῖλων describes the 'curved' shape of the κάδοι, as in *Odyssey* 22. 385 it is used of a 'curving shore' (κοῖλον ἐς αἰγιαλόν). Merone and some others believe that the epithet stresses the capacious size of the κάδοι, but the adjective can be used to describe any hollow ranging from that in a φλέψ to that in an entire district (Thessaly, Lacedaemon, etc.).³⁾

πώματα : the analogy of Hesiod *Erga* 94 γυνὴ χεῖρεσσι πίθου μέγα πῶμ' ἀφελούσα, adduced by Degani and others, strongly supports his contention that πώματα means 'lids, covers,' not 'draughts.' The latter would also be somewhat tautological with the following οἶνον. Compare Tibullus 2. 1.28 *Chio solvite vincla cado* and the passage from *Odyssey* 2. 349 ff. cited below under κάδων.

ἄφελκε : Page, commenting on this and the following imperative, asks: "But what was the point of choosing such violent words? -- 'Wrench off the lids of the casks, seize the red wine from the lees'? It is likely that these are selected words; they add colour to the picture of carousal -- 'Let us attack the casks and grab as much as we can get'." There is no doubt that ἔλκω can be a "violent" word, but it is not always (compare ἐφέλκω in the passage from Euripides *Cyclops* cited below under κάδων) and I do not see how we can be certain that it is here. Another possibility is that the κάδοι are sealed, as in Theocritus 7. 147 τετράενες δὲ πίθων ἀπελύετο κρατὸς ἀλειψαρ (and Gow *ad loc.*) and Horace *Odes* 3. 8.10-11 *corticem adstrictum pice dimovebit / amphorae*, so that even if Page is correct in his translation, the verb may have been chosen because of the effort required to prize off the lid rather than because of Archilochus' eagerness to get at the wine.

κάδων : most of the passages in which κᾶδος appears as a container for wine can be found in Athenaeus 11. 472 e - 473 b. Containers designated by this term clearly varied considerably in size and shape. Clitarchus *ap.* Athenaeus states that the Ionians called the κεράμιον a κᾶδος and Philochorus *ap.* Pollux 10. 71 states that παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς an ἀμφορεὺς was called a κᾶδος. Hedylyus *ap.* Athenaeus speaks of τετρα-χόοισι κᾶδοις, i.e., κᾶδοι containing about three gallons. For further details see D. A. Amyx, *Hesperia* 27 (1958) 186-90 with plate 47.

Archilochus does not indicate where the κᾶδοι are stored. In *Odyssey* 2. 349 ff. twelve ἀμφιφορῆες are filled with wine, fitted with lids (πώματα), and stored on Telemachus' ship in preparation for his voyage to Sparta, but we are not told where they were stowed. The same is true of *Odyssey* 9. 163-65, but in 13. 21 Alcinous goes throughout Odysseus' ship and stows the gifts he has given Odysseus under the thwarts (ὥν διὰ νηὸς ὑπὸ ζυγᾶ). Wine is not included among the gifts, but presumably it too could be stowed in the same place. If, however, διὰ σέλαματα indicates movement along the deck which ran the length of the ship, the implication of this is that the κᾶδοι are stowed on or more probably under the foredeck or the afterdeck.

In Synesius *Epist.* 32 Hercher, κεράμια of wine are stowed under the κατάστρωμα, 'deck.'⁴) The most interesting parallel, however, is Euripides *Cyclops* 144. Odysseus has promised to give Silenus wine in return for provisions and Silenus asks, ἐν σέλμασιν νεὼς ἐστίν, ἢ φέρεις σύ νιν; Unfortunately it is uncertain exactly what Euripides means by ἐν σέλμασιν and Ussher in his recent commentary on the play may be right in arguing that it is simply a periphrasis for ἐν νηί. It can hardly mean 'on the thwarts,' since wine stored there would be in the way of the rowers, and if any specific location is intended, it must be 'at (by, among) the thwarts' or 'on the deck.' It is perhaps possible that Euripides had Archilochus' poem in mind when he composed this section. In vv. 139 and 147 we find πῶμα, though with the meaning 'draught' rather than 'lid,' and in v. 151 Odysseus says he is bringing along a cup together with the wine-skin, ἐφέλκω καὶ ποτήρ' ἄσκοῦ μέτα.

One problem remains. Why does Archilochus use the plural when presumably one κῆδος would be sufficient to cause drunkenness? Perhaps they are nearing the end of their voyage and the κῆδοι are almost empty (see note 3), but I think it more likely that in his eagerness to get drunk he exaggerates the number of κῆδοι they will consume. We should also recognize that ἡμεῖς in v.8 may include more than two people.

8 ἄγρει : as was mentioned above under ἀφελκε, Page takes this to be a violent word, 'seize,' but here too I do not see how we can be certain of the meaning intended. Homer uses the verb merely as a virtual synonym of ἄγε in v.6, i.e., with a following imperative rather than accusative. Its only other early instances in literature are in Sappho fr. 31. 13-14 τρόμος δὲ παῖσαν ἄγρει and Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 126 ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἄδε κέλευθος. Some element of violence is present in these passages, especially in the latter example, but there is none in the compounds παλινάγρετος and αὐτάγρετος, both of which are Homeric.

οἶνον ἐρυθρόν : this combination occurs six times in the *Odyssey*, always at line-end, but never in the *Iliad*. For its position in Archilochus compare *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 208. In view of the Homeric parallels I doubt that the epithet has any special significance in Archilochus. Athenaeus l. 26 b states that μέλας (= ἐρυθρός) wine is δυναμικώτατος, but this does not justify Merone's argument that Archilochus is calling for "un energetico di grande potenza." Whenever a colour-adjective is applied to wine in the early period it is always μέλας, ἐρυθρός or αἷθος, all of which are synonyms.

ἀπὸ τρυγός : literally 'away from the lees.' The idea is not so much to avoid disturbing the lees (if the κῶθων is of the type described by Critias with an inward-curving lip, some lees in the cup would not matter anyway) as to draw the wine all the way from where the lees are, i.e., in effect all the way to the bottom. All the wine is to be removed, with only the lees left behind. The same idea can be expressed in various ways: compare ἐς τρύγα χεῖλος ἐρείδων (Theocritus 7. 70), μέχρι τρυγός (Synesius *Epist.* 32 Hercher), poti... faece tenus cadi (Horace *Odes* 3. 15.16). In Lucian *Timon* 19 ἐν τῇ τρυγῇ

τοῦ πίθου means 'in the bottom of the jar.' Treu suggests that ἀπὸ τρυγός might indicate that the wine has already been drawn off almost to the lees, that only a little wine is left in the κῶδοι when Archilochus gives his instructions, but this seems a less natural interpretation of the Greek.

οὐδέ γάρ ἡμεῖς : three meanings of the negative can be postulated: (1) 'for not even we shall stay sober (in spite of our being on watch),' (2) 'for we too shall not stay sober (since others are getting drunk),' and (3) οὐδέ as an emphatic οὐ. See Denniston, *Greek Particles* 190-98. A decision is impossible in view of the fragmentary nature of the poem, but οὐδέ as an emphatic negative seems to me to be preferable. For οὐδέ γάρ plus a pronoun after the bucolic diaeresis compare *Iliad* 10. 25 and *Odyssey* 23. 266. There is no reason not to take ἡμεῖς as a genuine plural, though whether it includes more than two people cannot be determined. Nor can it be determined whether the person ordered to bring wine is one of those on watch or someone else, perhaps a slave.

9 νηφόμεν : Athenaeus records νήφειν μὲν, which Musurus altered to νήφειν ἐν, but the papyrus gives us νηφέ[ι]ν according to Grenfell and Hunt, νηφέμεν according to West. The presence of an accent in the papyrus over the *epsilon* supports West's reading, although it should be noted that infinitives in -έμεν or -έμεναι are not found elsewhere in the remains of Archilochus. νήφω is predominantly a prose word, although a participial form appears three times in the *Theognidea*.

ἐν φυλακῇ τῇδε : there are seven examples of φυλακή in Homer and in every instance a night-watch is involved. The same is therefore probably true here too. It is unclear, however, whether the watch is onboard ship or on land, though the latter seems more likely. There are numerous references in Homer and Apollonius to putting into land at night and sometimes we are specifically told that they spend the night ashore, no doubt because sleeping would be more comfortable ashore than on a ship. When Odysseus and his men reach the island near the land of the Cyclopes, they engage in a successful hunt and spend the rest of the day in feasting and

drinking, οὐ γάρ πω νηῶν ἐξέφθιτο οἶνος ἐρυθρός, / ἀλλ' ἐνέην· πολλὸν γάρ ἐν ἀμφιφορεῦσιν ἕκαστοι / ἠφύσαμεν Κικόνων ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἐλόντες (9. 163-65). Then they spend the night ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης (169). The implication is that the wine is carried from the ships and drunk ashore. But in Archilochus, even though the rest of the ship's company may be ashore, it is possible that a watch was kept on the ship, either instead of or in addition to a watch on land.⁵⁾

For some form of ὄδε in this position in the pentameter compare Theognis 56; 354; 604; 782, and Tyrtaeus fr. 4.8 W. In none of these, however, does the demonstrative modify a noun in the first half of the line. The same is true for οὗτος, at least in early elegy.

In conclusion, we can say with reasonable confidence that it is night, that the ship is not in motion, and that Archilochus is instructing someone to make repeated trips, cup in hand, across the deck or through the thwarts in order to obtain the wine which will provide relief for those on watch. Monaco is surely right in arguing against the interpretation defended by Gigante that the first command represents the action of extending a cup to the lips of each rower as he is rowing. Not only does this involve a most unlikely *hysteron proteron* with the last two commands, but also the evidence of the rest of the fragment is opposed to such an interpretation. Everything from 6 ἀλλ' ἄγε to 8 τρυγός represents a logical progression of actions directed towards one goal, the statement in the last sentence that those on watch will not stay sober. Finally, many of the colourful additions made by commentators should be banished from any discussion of this poem. There is no evidence, for example, that "la mer est mauvaise" (Bonnard on fr. 12 L-B), that there is "stringimento di cuore" (Pontani), that it is cold (Pieraccioni) or, incredibly, that our poem is proof of a "profondo senso d'umanità di Archiloco" (Bologna).⁶⁾

NOTES

1) The following works will be cited hereafter by the name of the author only: O. A. Bologna, *Archiloco* (Firenze 1975) 33-36; L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1971); E. Degani, "Marginalia," *Helikon* 3 (1963) 485-86; A. Garzya, "Una variazione archilochea in Sinesio," *Maia* 10 (1958) 66-71, reprinted in *Studi sulla lirica greca* (Messina-Firenze 1963) 161-69; B. Gentili, "Interpretazione di Archiloco fr. 2 D. = 7 L.-B.," *RFIC* 93 (1965) 129-34; M. Gigante, "Interpretazioni archilochee," *Atti dell' Accademia Pontaniana* n.s. 7 (1958) 51-55; G. M. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody* (Ithaca 1974) 226; E. Merone, *Aggettivazione, sintassi e figure di stile in Archiloco* (Napoli 1960) 16-18; G. Monaco, "De fragmento Archilochi 5 A Diehl," *Atti dell' Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Palermo* 4.16 (1955-56) 185-91, and "Nota archilochea," *A&R* 5 (1960) 19-22; D. L. Page, *Archiloque*, *Entretiens sur l' antiquité classique* 10 (Genève 1964) 128-31; D. Pieraccioni, *Antologia della lirica greca* (3rd ed., Firenze 1967) 16-17; F. M. Pontani, *Pleiadi. Frammenti di lirica greca* (Roma 1952) 13-15; M. Treu, *Archilochos* (München 1959) 191.

2) Garzya argues that φοῖτα denotes a furtive movement, but the fact that this verb is sometimes used of shades and sleep-visions is not sufficient reason to assume that furtiveness is an essential aspect of its meaning. In these contexts the verb, as Gentili points out, suggests a roaming or flitting movement.

3) It is perhaps not impossible that κοῖλων means 'almost empty,' as in Socrates *ap. Athenaeus* 9. 388 a, τοῦ ποταμοῦ κοῖλου ῥυέντος (compare also Thucydides 7. 84.4). If this were so, it would explain the need for more than one κάδος.

4) Garzya finds allusions to Archilochus' poem in this letter, but the similarities do not seem to me to be close enough to support any connection between the two.

5) Gentili argues that Synesius *Epist.* 130, with its references to sentry-duty and the difficulty of staying awake, is support for his view that δορί in fr. 2 W. means 'ship' and that it formed part of the same poem as fr. 4. Although fr. 2 is quoted in this letter and although Gentili may well be right in his explanation of δορί, I see little evidence that Synesius had fr. 4 in mind when he wrote his letter. The only verbal similarity is that between φυλακάς and φυλακήν.

6) Although I do not believe it has any bearing on the interpretation of the fragment, something should be said about the circumstances surrounding the poem's composition and delivery. My assumption is that it was recited at some convivial gathering, as was probably true for much of Archilochus' poetry, but there is no way of determining when it was composed. This might be evident if we had the entire poem, but I see no reason why Archilochus at a symposium could not have said something like, "Here are some verses I composed recently when on watch," and then proceeded to recite this poem. Whether it was actually composed during the watch or at a later time, is another matter. He might well have given the poem at least a rudimentary form while on watch and then polished it later.